

Pacific Northwest Chapter, National Railway Historical Society, P O Box 8853,  
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### MARCH MEETING:

The March meeting of the Pacific Northwest Chapter, NRHS, will be held on Friday, March 15<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 PM, room 206 Union Station, Portland. The program will be presented by Miln Gillespie and Jack Holst and will feature rail activities in what is now Vietnam. Jack Holst will present a program entitled "Gizmos of the West".

### NEWS AFLOAT:

The Port of Portland will retire its steam-powered sternwheeler "Portland". The "Portland" is well remembered by all of the delegates at the 1965 NRHS convention which was held in Portland. It was the first time that a boat was the star attraction of a rail fan convention and many NRHS members have photos of the boat with black smoke streaming from its smokestack as it moved at top speed under the Broadway Bridge. An effort is being made to preserve the vessel and operate it in passenger service on the Willamette and Columbia Rivers. It is one of the last steam powered vessels of its type in the world and as such deserves a better fate than the scrap yard.

The first part of March saw a strike by the ferry employees against the British Columbia Government Ferries. The Canadian Pacific boats were not affected and thus were swamped with passenger, automobiles and freight. The Canadian Pacific fleet is but a shadow of its former self with black and white ships were seen everywhere in British Columbia, Alaska and the inland waters near Seattle.

After period of more than a decade, passenger vessels will again offer regular service between Seattle and Alaska. Alaska Marine Highway System ferries are providing the service. The 49<sup>th</sup> State's M/V Matanuska departs each Saturday at 3 PM from Seattle and arrives at 7 AM Mondays in Ketchikan. It is the first time since 1954 that winter passenger ship service has been regularly scheduled between Seattle and Alaska. The Puget Sound-Alaska service is presently scheduled for winter and spring only, but the State is examining the possibility of leasing and additional vessel so that the new service could be continued throughout the summer.

### PENN CENTRAL:

With the merger of the New York Central and the Pennsylvania Railroad approved and in operation the first signs are beginning to appear of this union. Almost immediately, the railroad's new image began revealing itself on a handful of diesel locomotives, for which the standard paint scheme will be black with Penn Central lettering and heralds. It was announced that the office color for both passenger and freight cars would be "deep

water green”, slightly darker than Central’s box-car jade, and the first passenger coach in the new dress – PRR self propelled unit No. 416 which rolled out of the Wilmington shops on February 23<sup>rd</sup>.

The new giant has-among other things – total asset of \$6.3 billion dollars, (including subsidiaries) 4,202 locomotives, 194,656 freight cars, 4,937 passenger cars, 95,883 employees, 19,246 miles of road, 1967 operating revenues of \$1.7 billion.

(Louisville Chapter NRHS)

#### LOCAL NEWS:

SP&S lounge-sleeper “Mt Hood” is being removed from service and will be shopped before being returned for service. It is being replaced by a car loan from the Pennsylvania.....SP&S has also taken delivery of its new ALCO Century units, the only six-wheel locomotives on the system outside of the #750 and EMD E7 with an A-1-A wheel arrangement. The new locomotives are the most powerful single engine diesels ever built by ALCO.....The Chapters former lounge car which was sold to the SP&S has now entered the passenger car shops where it will be converted into a coach. Is there another passenger car that has such a varied history? .....How come the newsstand in the Union Pacific Station in La Grande, Oregon is open longer than the one is Portland’s Union Station? .....The NP is laying welded on its mainline north of Woodland, Washington ..... The Milwaukee Road has suspended operation of its electric freight motors on mainline through freights and will be used in the future only as helpers.....The most wanted railroad in the West seems to be the little Peninsula Terminal Railroad in North Portland with Southern Pacific, Union Pacific, SP&S, Milwaukee Road all wanting to purchase it. The line is currently being considered for expansion into the Port of Portland’s huge industrial complex at Rivergate.....

#### INLAND EMPIRE WANDERINGS:

On March 6<sup>th</sup> your excursion director and ex-excursion director decided to ride the “City of Hinkle” and test the dinners on the north and south bank roads. At 3:00 PM we were off on SP&S number 2 Spokane. By 3:05 we had found seats in the lounge car “Mt Hood”. We spent a pleasant afternoon watching the Columbia River slip by and had an excellent Steak in the diner “Willamette”, the ex-Katy car and now the standby diner for the Streamliner. Our only complaint was that we were reduced to drinking a white wine with our Steak dinner. This is a bit too German for even our second-generation Germans.

Our arrival in Spokane was five minutes early and we found that the city had a high school basketball tournament and the rail fans old standby, the Ridpath, did not have a room. After considering spending the night on the UP mixed to Kellogg-Warner we found space in the Davenport Hotel.

The next morning we were down at Union Station for the departure of UP train #19, known to local people as “the train to southern Idaho”. Is there any other town the size of Spokane that can boast the luxury of three large railroad passenger stations? The train is known to rail fans as “The City of Hinkle”. Regardless of what you call it, it was a very unusual train we found in the station. The Guide, public timetable and even the employees table shows it as a first class passenger train but it operated as a mixed train for some time. What we found in the station on March 7, 1968 was 2 E9’s, 925 and 943 freshly shopped and their 4500HP would be more than adequate for the day’s work. Behind the units were storage-mail car 5702, reclining seat rebuilt Harriman coach 511 and 8 box cars followed by Union Pacific caboose 25130. There were also about six passengers.

Our train trundled off crossing the falls of the Spokane River on a high trestle. The rest of the trip is through some of the most desolate country imaginable. Besides crossing the Snake River on the highest bridge on the Union Pacific system the passenger is treated to many views of the Snake River next to the train. The schedule

is decorated with numerous stops but those are inhabited by prairie dogs and only at Ayer are human beings found. The UP has also decided to make a five minute rest stop at Ayer where decent sandwiches and beverages can be purchased. A lady from the hotel comes down at train time. Everyone involved with the operation could not do enough to satisfy passengers.

We arrived in Hinkle twenty minutes early at 2:55 PM. After seeing Hinkle a nap was taken on the baggage carts while waiting for the eastbound "City of Portland". The City was five minutes early arriving but left at exactly 4:26 PM. By 4:30 we were in the basement lounge in the City dome lounge car. Here we get the sad news that the dome diners are being removed from the City and are being replaced by conventional diners every bit as fancy as the old diners. Apparently the dome diners require too large a crew in the off season and they can't handle the crowds during the summer since people had a tendency to take their time eating and this slow down the turnover. Regardless of whether on one or three levels the food and service were fault-less and just as slick as the old UP. The steward and crew on the car were tops.

We arrived at La Grande early again after a pleasant trip through the Blue Mountains. We had about an hour and a half until the Portland Rose would speed us home so we retired to the social center of La Grande, the Stockman's Bar. When the appointed hour came we retired to our Pullman space after a very interesting conversation with a Road Foreman of Engines who assured us that the City of Portland would remain for a long time. Of course, the Rose was on time but we stayed in our space until a more reasonable hour.

Thus ended a very pleasant trip which could be easily made by the Mt. St. Helens.